

diluvian "patriarchs." For between the Palæolithic degenerates and the Neolithic degenerates came the Flood, which killed off all the extinct animals, such as the mammoth, which

"at all events, is not such an extremely ancient animal. Its remains are even to-day excavated, in some cases, as in Polar regions, with its flesh and hair intact."

It is difficult to know what to make of a writer who, in the twentieth century, believes, apparently, in the actual historical existence of Noah and his ark, and, by "combining the traditions of Jews, Arabians, and other nations with the story as told in the Hindu Puranas and the Sybylline [sic!] Oracles," arrives at the following interesting account, "which may or may not be true," of what happened about the time of the Flood (pp. 164, 165) :—

"Mahaleel was a very distinguished man who married a widow in the line of Cain. His son, Jared, thus acquired a claim to the rulership of the world, and exercised it for some time with great distinction. He is said by some to be the great Sesostris of the Greeks. . . . Methuselah maintained the holy traditions, and for his sake the flood was postponed till his death had taken place. Noah was by distinction the righteous man. . . . The nation descended from Ham very quickly turned aside to the old idolatry, and worshipped their ancestors under various names. These may be traced in Egypt, Chaldea, Phœnicia, and elsewhere. The children of Shem became kings of Magadha, but the dynasty ended about 2100 B.C. Noah was soon deposed from his rule by his sons, and driven away from the territory occupied by them. According to one account he was last seen about 2000 B.C., and he was of a colour between white and ruddy, and bald-headed." (!)

#### FIELD ORNITHOLOGY.

*Camps and Cruises of an Ornithologist.* By F. M. Chapman. Pp. xvi+432. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.) Price 12s. net.

FOR seven years the author, with the assistance of artist and *préparateur*, devoted the nesting season of birds to collecting specimens and making field studies and photographs on which to base a series of what have been termed "Habitat Groups" of North American birds for the American Museum of Natural History. These groups are designed to illustrate not only the habits and haunts of the birds shown, but also the country in which they live. The birds, and, in most instances, their nests and young, are therefore placed in a facsimile reproduction, containing from 60 to 160 feet of the locality in which they are found, and to this realistic representation of their habitat is added a background, painted from nature, and so deftly joined to the foreground that it is difficult to distinguish where one ends and the other begins. A reference to the photographs of these groups, which form some of the illustrations of this delightful book of field ornithology, will convince anyone at once of the truth of this remark. Some of these panoramic backgrounds portray not only the haunts of certain American birds, but America as well.

In the pursuit of his calling the author has had  
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the good fortune to behold some of the most interesting and remarkable sights in the world of birds. The object of the present volume is to perpetuate his experiences and studies by telling the story of the various expeditions of which the groups were the objects, adding such information concerning the birds observed as seems worthy of record, and illustrating the whole with many photographs from nature, and a number of the groups themselves. The result is one of the most readable as well as informing books of the kind we have had the pleasure of seeing.

With the exception of one chapter, the whole book deals with American birds. But this need not be a drawback in the mind of even those whose ornithological interests are almost wholly confined to British birds. The author remarks that next to their native birds there are probably none of more general interest to the average American nature-lover than the birds of England. This is partly due to sentimental reasons. But we can return the compliment, for others. One is that many American birds, although considered by systematists as distinct species, are so like European birds that for all practical purposes of the field ornithologist they may be considered the same, while others are absolutely identical. So that in reading a book about the habits of these birds in America we are learning something more about our own birds' habits, modified a little, perhaps, by a slightly different environment or by different conditions of life. This last comes home to us when we read the account of Gardiner's Island ("within one hundred miles of our most populous city"), where there are no rats and no cats, "the ogres of the bird-world," and hardly any "vermin" destructive to bird-life. This large island, containing 4000 acres, is a place of peace and plenty for the birds. The whole account of it is full of interest, but the most remarkable fact is that the osprey, which is *very abundant*, builds its nest often in lowly situations, and actually in some cases on the ground. A number of illustrations of the ospreys and their nests are given, the great piled-up heaps of sticks built by the birds which breed on the beach affording excellent chances of photographing the old birds at the nest.

Some birds are more get-at-able in the North-West than they are, say, in that almost unknown land, the marshes of south-eastern Europe. Take the great white pelican, for instance. It is a most difficult—nearly impossible—bird to study in Europe; but in many of the numberless lakes of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, invariably upon islands, white pelicans nest, a colony containing anything from a dozen to several thousand birds. This bird so closely resembles the European one that it used to be considered identical with it. The chapter on and illustrations of it are therefore very welcome, for the author saw a good deal of pelicans.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book describes the flamingo—not, indeed, our pink flamingo, but the brilliant red species (*Ph. ruber*). However, a flamingo, so far as life-habits are concerned, seems to be simply a flamingo wherever he lives. It is here truly remarked that there are larger

birds than the flamingo, and birds with more brilliant plumage, but no other large bird is so brightly coloured, and no other brightly-coloured bird is so large. When to these more superficial attractions is added the fact that little or nothing has hitherto been known of the nesting habits of this singular bird, one may, in a measure at least, realise the intense longing of the naturalist, not only to behold a flamingo city, but at the same time to lift the veil through which the flamingo's home life has been but dimly seen. Nearly forty pages are devoted to the lifting of this veil for the reader, and the account is illustrated by more than a score of pictures of the birds at and on their nests, and of the nests, eggs and the young in various stages; included among these are two beautiful coloured photographs of the adult birds, in one of which they are seen feeding their young in the nest.

It is quite impossible to find space even to enumerate all the contents of this charming book, but Florida, Bahama, the western prairies, California, and many other localities were visited by the author, and are here described. Lastly, we have a chapter on his impressions of English bird-life; and the impressions of such an experienced bird-man are distinctly valuable and informing, and will be read with the greatest interest by our field ornithologists. We cannot enter into them widely here. As he approached the coast of Wales the "boreal" birds he saw about the stacks and islands of Wales afforded convincing evidence of high latitude, and, at the same time, an admirable illustration of the faunally composite character of English bird-life, types Americans are accustomed to consider representative of northern and southern life-zones finding in England congenial surroundings. Unlike some visitors, the author was not too late to hear the nightingale; he was disappointed at first with the song of the skylark, but before leaving England found himself listening to it with increasing pleasure. None of the birds seen from the train impressed him more than the pewit. We read :

"The bird's size, form, and colours, its grace of carriage on the ground, and dashing, erratic, aerial evolutions, give it high rank as an attractive part of any avifauna; while its abundance, in spite of the demand which places thousands of its eggs on the market annually, is inexplicable."

This is all true, though most of the eggs come from the Continent; but a bird which can furnish Mr. Chapman with "a brand new sensation in bird-life" must be something we ought to be proud of.

The author visited various parts of England, and many of our famous sea-bird haunts. His pictures of these places (including one of Selborne) are delightful, and everything he has written about our avifauna is well worth reading. It is satisfactory to read that birds are more abundant here than they are in North America. The book is very full of illustrations, and they are excellent—far better than most of the photographs of this kind. But the heavily leaded paper on which it is printed makes it simply too heavy to hold without actual weariness!

O. V. A.

#### EXOTERIC PHILOSOPHY.

- (1) *In the Abstract.* By N. Alliston. Pp. 156. (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co. Ltd., 1909.) Price 2s. 6d.
- (2) *Progressive Creation: a Reconciliation of Religion with Science.* By Rev. H. E. Sampson. In two vols. Vol. i., pp. xii+484; vol. ii., pp. vi+517. (London: Rebman, Ltd., 1909.) Price 21s. net.
- (3) *Progressive Redemption.* By Rev. H. E. Sampson. Pp. xxiv+616. (London: Rebman, Ltd., 1909.) Price 12s. 6d. net.
- (4) *Scientific Idealism, or Matter and Force and Their Relation to Life and Consciousness.* By W. Kingsland. Pp. xxiii+427. (London: Rebman, Ltd., 1909.) Price 7s. 6d. net.

THESE books have this much in common, that none of them bears the academic hall-mark. Of the three writers, Mr. Alliston is the most ambitious of a precise logic. His book consists of a group of essays on such various topics as "The Planetary Distances," "Materialism," "The Value of Things." His criticism of the first law of motion is perhaps the most original effort in the book. He is dissatisfied with a formulation which assumes that rest and frictionless motion are alike constant; he holds that frictionless motion would cease as soon as the original force should be exhausted. Mr. Alliston admits that the law as stated must be considered practically adequate; he does not attempt to make any inference, dynamical or metaphysical, from his criticism; and the essential proof for this inconclusive result, the explanation of how an ideal unhindered velocity would be diminished, he has not provided. Mr. Alliston's essay on materialism is a clear and simple re-statement of now commonplace criticism; he does not, however, sufficiently realise the difficulty of finding a moral differentiation between materialism and a spiritualism which does not promise the conservation of individuality. The book is pleasantly written, and might be turned over with interest and profit by beginners in philosophy.

The authors of the other works placed at the head of this notice have each made a bold attempt to reach the final synthesis which is supposed to be the goal of philosophy. Mr. Sampson's interest is, in the main, theological; Mr. Kingsland's effort is more purely philosophical. The system of the former, though presented with much ability, will, it is to be feared, strike most people as fantastic. He starts from the failure of science to account for evolutionary breaks and "missing links." This failure suggests to him that the facts covered by the current theory of evolution represent an interruption rather than an integral part of the great order of true evolution. That true order is, it appears, a progressive creation of beings who pass by successive reincarnations from lower to higher types, culminating at last in perfect Godhood. A condition of its continuity is the preservation of purity of type, a condition violated by our "Adamic" ancestors, who inter-married with an inferior kind. Sin then entered the world, catastrophic physical changes occurred, and our history since has been a struggle towards the ancient